nounced impression upon the Chinese at home. Such innovations as they brought probably affected chiefly the China of the North, and the North was so distinct from the Yangtze Valley, where centered so much of the cultural life under the Sung, that European travellers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries regarded it as a separate country.

However, the Sung period marks the opening of a new intellectual era. The general level of education was probably rising. The thought-forms to which most of the educated class assented down to the opening of the twentieth century were shaped. These patterns achieved their preeminence only out of controversy. JThe debates that marked the course of the dynasty, especially before the transfer of the Sung capital to Lin-an (Hangchow), probably stirred the thinking portion of the nation as profoundly as any that China had ever known, certainly more than at any time since the Chou.

The most acrimonious of the controversies, the one that influenced most of the others, centered around the political, economic, and educational program instituted by Wang An-shih. Wang was born in 1021 and died in 1086, and his lifetime therefore spanned some of the most vigorous years of the dynasty. His reforms contemplated a thorough-going reorganization of the fiscal and military policy of the state and were accompanied by important modifications in agriculture and internal commerce. The purpose back of them seems to have been to increase the prosperity of the masses and to strengthen the Empire in its struggle against the northern invaders.

Wang An-shih was born into the official-scholar class and passed successfully through the usual examination system prescribed for

those who aspired to public office. He made no attempt to revolt against the authority of the Confucian Classics, but professed to find in these revered works the sanction for his proposals. The main features of his system included (1) the appointment of a commission to draft a budget for the state, a means of effecting a large annual saving in expenses; (2) a state monopoly of commerce, by which Wang would have the produce of each district used first for the payment of taxes and then for the needs of the district, the surplus to be purchased by the government and held either against future local needs, or to be transported elsewhere